

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00
IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00
NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 ACDA-07 OMB-01 ARA-06
TRSE-00 /077 W
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O 031452Z MAR 77
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5117
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

S E C R E T TEL AVIV 1554

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, PINT,IS
SUBJECT: HAARETZ REPORTS RABIN LABELED THREE BILATERAL ISSUES MARGINAL

1. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED: IN THE LEAD ARTICLE OF THIS MORNING'S HAARETZ, MATTI GOLAN QUOTES PRIME MINISTER RABIN AS TELLING SECRETARY VANCE DURING HIS RECENT VISIT TO ISRAEL THAT THE KFIR REFUSAL, NABATIYA, AND GULF OIL DRILLINGS WERE "MARGINAL ISSUES." THE STORY INCLUDES A DENIAL BY THE PRIME MINISTER'S PRESS ADVISER, DAN PATTIR, BUT THEN QUOTES FROM WHAT IT SAYS IS PAGE 53 OF THE PROTOCOL OF THE RABIN-VANCE MEETING TO AFFIRM THE ACCURACY OF ITS REPORT. END UNCLASSIFIED

2. BEGIN SECRET: WE HAVE CHECKED GOLAN'S QUOTE WITH PAGE 53 OF THE FOREIGN MINISTRY'S TRANSCRIPT OF THE CONVERSATION (POUCHED TO THE DEPARTMENT MARCH 1) AND EXCEPT FOR MINOR DIFFERENCES, PRESUMABLY ARISING FROM TRANSLATING IT FROM ENGLISH TO HEBREW AND BACK TO ENGLISH, IT IS VIRTUALLY

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VERBATIM. RABIN'S CHARACTERIZATION OF THESE ISSUES AS MARGINAL, DESPITE THE CONTEXT, WILL NOT GO DOWN WELL WITH MANY ISRAELIS--IN OR OUT OF THE GOVERNMENT. SUSPICION FOR THE LEAK FALLS ON PERES SUPPORTERS, EITHER AS A MOVE IN THE INTRA-PARTY STRUGGLE FOR POWER THAT CONTINUES EVEN AFTER THE NOMINATION OF RABIN OVER PERES TO BE LAOR'S CANDIDATE FOR PRIME MINISTER OR AS SIMPLY AN ACT OF

VINDICTIVENESS. END SECRET

3. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED: FULL TRANSLATED TEXT OF GOLAN ARITCLE FOLLOWS: PRIME MINISTER YITZHAK RABIN TOLD U.S. SECRTARY OF STATE CYRUS VANCE THAT THE QUESTION OF THE AMERICAN EFUSAL TO LET ISRAEL SELL KFIR PLANES TO ECUADOR WAS A "MARGINAL ISSUE." MR RABIN MADE THIS STATEMENT SOME TWO WEEKS AGO, AT THE MEETINF OF MR. VANCE AND HIS RETINUE WITH THE TEAM OF MINISTERS AND SENIOR ADVISERS. "MARGINAL" WAS ALSO THE WORD USED BY MR. RABIN TO DESCRIBE THE DIFFERENCE OF OPINION BETWEEN ISRAEL AND THE U.S. REGARDING THE OIL DRILLINGS BEING CARRIED OUT BY AMOCO IN THE GULF OF SUEZ, AND THE NABAIIYA AFFAIR.

4. ASKED TO REACT TO THIS INFORMATION, THE PRIME MINISTER'S PRESS ADVISER, DAN PATTIR, SAID: THIS IS UTTERLY GROUND-LESS. THE PRIME MINISTER NEVER TERMED ANY OF THE ABOVE MATTERS AS "MARGINAL."

5. FOLLOWING THIS DENIAL THE REPORTER OF THIS PAPER INVESTIGATED FURTHER. HE FOUND THAT ON PAGE 53 OF THE PROTOCOL RELATING TO THE MEETING BETWEEN THE U.S. DELEGATION AND THE TEAM OF ISRAELI MINISTERS, THE FOLLOWING APPEARS: "A WAY MUST BE FOUND TO RESOLVE MARGINAL PROBLEMS SUCH AS THE LEBANON AFFAIR (MEANING NABATIYA), THE SUEZ GULF, AS WELL AS EXPORTS WHICH ARE NOT EXPORTS IN THE FULL MEANING OF THE TERM (REFERRING TO THE EXPORT OF THE KFIR PLANES TO ECUADOR). THESE ARE MARGINAL ISSUES WHEN VIEWED IN THEIR CURRENT PROPORTION." MR. RABIN MADE THESE STATE-
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MENTS IN SUMMING UP THE SUBJECTS DISCUSSED UP TO THAT POINT.

6.AT THE FINAL STAGES OF THE MEETING THE PRIME MINISTER AGAIN REVERTED TO THIS SUBJECT. HE ASKED MR. VANCE: "IS YOUR ANSWER ON THE KFIR PLANES FINAL?" MR. VANCE REPLIED: "THIS IS NOT A FINAL ANSWER, BUT I WOULD NOT WANT YOU TO DELUDE YOURSELVES BECAUSE I AM AFRAID THE ANSWER WILL BE A NEGATIVE ONE."

7. THIS REPORTER ALSO LEARNED THAT IN ACCORDANCE WITH REPORTS RECENTLY RECEIVED IN JERUSALEM, MR. VANCE MADE USE OF THE DEFINITION AS EXPRESSED BY MR. RABIN. ON HIW RETURN TO WASHINGTON FROM HIS MIDDLE EAST TOUR MR. VANCE WAS APPEALED TO BY VARIOUS U.S. PERSONALITIES ANXIOUS TO PERSUADE HIM TO EXERT HIS INFLUENCE FOR PERMISSION TO BE GRANTED TO ISRAEL TO EXPORT THE KFIR PLANES TO ECUADOR. THE U.S. SECRETARY TOLD SOME OF THESE FIGURES THAT HE HAD GAINED THE IMPRESSION, FROM WHAT MR. RABIN HAD SAID, THAT THIS WAS NOT A SUBJECT OF MAJOR IMPORTANCE TO ISRAEL,

AND THAT HE WAS THEREFORE SURPRISED THAT THEY HAD
APPEALED TO HIM FOR HIS SUPPORT.

8. THERE IS CONSIDERABLE BITTERNESS IN A LARGE NUMBER OF
GOVERNMENT CIRCLES IN JERUSALEM OVER THE U.S. REFUSAL.
THERE IS AN INCREASING FEELING THAT THIS REFUSAL COULD
HAVE NEGATIVE REPERCUSSIONS EXTENDING FAR BEYOND THE
IMMEDIATE ANNULMENT OF THE DEAL WITH ECUADOR. IT IS FEARED
THAT OTHER COUNTRIES, WHICH HAD EXPRESSED GREAT INTEREST IN
PURCHASING KFIR PLANES, WILL NOW BE DETERRED BY THE CHANCE
THAT THE U.S. WOULD VETO ANY SUCH DEAL. NOR IS THE
POSSIBILITY EXCLUDED THAT OTHER EXPORT FIELDS OF THE
IAI AND MILITARY INDUSTRY WILL BE ADVERSELY AFFECTED BY
THE HARM TO THE IMAGE OF THE IAI AS AN INDEPENDENT INDUSTRY.

9. THE FEELING IN JERUSALEM IS THAT UNLESS AN ARRANGEMENT
CAN BE FOUND TO IMPLEMENT THE TRANSACTION, THIS

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SUBJECT WILL BE RAISED IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S TALKS IN
WASHINGTON, DESPITE THE EXPRESSIONS USED BY HIM AT THE
MEETING TWO WEEKS AGO DURING MR. VANCE'S VISIT HERE. END
TEXT.

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